

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7337

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMCONSUL SURABAYA

AMCONSUL MEDAN

USIA WASHDC

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 JAKARTA 3124

E. O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PINS, PINT, ID, SOPN

SUBJECT: CONTINUING UNREST IN JAKARTA AND BANDUNG

REF: (A) JAKARTA 2980 (DTG 070855Z MAR 78)

1. SUMMARY: THE GOVERNMENT IS SHOWING INCREASING CONCERN ABOUT THE RECENT EMERGENCE OF LOW-LEVEL POLITICAL ACTIVITY ON HIGH SCHOOL CAMPUSES IN JAKARTA AND BANDUNG. TROOPS HAVE INVADDED HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOMS IN BOTH CITIES, WITH SOME RESULTING INJURIES AND RUMORS OF THE DEATH OF ONE OR TWO STUDENTS IN BANDUNG. VIRTUALLY ALL NORMAL ACADEMIC ACTIVITY IS AT A STANDSTILL IN JAKARTA'S AND BANDUNG'S MAJOR UNIVERSITIES, LARGELY AS A RESULT OF STUDENT "STRIKES." THE RECTOR OF THE BOGOR AGRICULTURAL INSTITUTE, AT A GREAT PROFESSIONAL RISK, HAS PUBLICLY EXPRESSED
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SYMPATHY FOR DISSIDENT STUDENTS. END SUMMARY.

2. IN THE PAST TEN DAYS, THERE HAS BEEN A FRADUAL EMERGENCE OF LOW-LEVEL ANTI-GOVERNMENT POLITICAL ACTIVITY ON HIGH SCHOOL CAMPUSES IN JAKARTA AND BANDUNG, SO FAR LARGELY RESTRICTED TO PAMPHLETEERING AND POSTER HANGING. HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT LEADERS HAVE ALSO ATTEMPTED, SO FAR WITH ONLY

LIMITED SUCCESS, TO COORDINATE THEIR ACTIVITIES WITH THOSE OF DISSIDENT UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN THE TWO CITIES.

3. DESPITE THE MINIMAL DIRECT THREAT OF THESE ACTIVITIES, THE GOVERNMENT HAS SHOWN MARKED CONCERN ABOUT THEM AND A DETERMINATION TO STAMP THEM OUT BEFORE THEY GATHER MOMENTUM. BOTH KOPKAMTIB CHIEF OF STAFF ADM. SUDOMO AND INTERIOR MINISTER GEN. AMIRMACHMUD HAVE ISSUED STRONG WARNINGS TO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS -- AND ESPECIALLY TO THEIR PARENTS -- OF THE GOVERNMENT'S DETERMINATION TO SQUASH SUCH ACTIVITIES. SUDOMO WARNED THAT PARENTS ENCOURAGING THEIR HIGH SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN TO ENGAGE IN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES WOULD BE SWIFTLY DEALT WITH AND, IF THEY HAPPEN TO BE GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES, FIRED.

4. BACKING UP THE GOVERNMENT'S GOUGH WORDS, SECURITY TROOPS HAVE INVADDED HIGH SCHOOL (AND EVEN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL) CLASSROOMS IN JAKARTA AND BANDUNG ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS IN THE PAST FEW DAYS, DISRUPTING CLASSES, RIPPING DOWN STUDENT POSTERS AND ROUGHING UP BOTH STUDENTS AND TEACHERS. THE MOST SERIOUS INCIDENTS IN JAKARTA HAVE OCCURRED AT THE PRESTIGIOUS PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL III, WHERE THE CHILDREN OF MANY PROMINENT GOVERNMENT LEADERS MATRICULATE. YESTERDAY, AS ON SEVERAL PREVIOUS DAYS, ARMED TROOPS (WITH BAYONETS AT READY, ACCORDING TO THREE SEPARATE SOURCES) ABRUPTLY APPEARED AT THE SCHOOL AND ENTERED

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SEVERAL CLASSROOMS, SHOIVING AND BEATING SEVERAL STUDENTS AND TEACHERS WHO TRIED TO DEFEND THEIR CHARGES. IN BANDUNG, THE PROBLEM HAS OCCASIONALLY SPILLED OVER INTO THE STREETS, WITH SMALL GROUPS OF STUDENTS ON MOTORCYCLES MOVING THROUGH THE CITY, CARRYING ANTI-GOVERNMENT BANNERS AND SHOUTING SLOGANS. THERE ARE WIDESPREAD BUT SO FAR UNCONFIRMED REPORTS THAT A HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT (BY SOME ACCOUNTS IN SUCH A MOTORCYCLE PROCESSION) WAS KILLED AS A RESULT OF A CLASH WITH TROOPS. (WE ALSO HAVE AN APPARENTLY UNRELATED AND UNCONFIRMED RETORT THAT A BANDUNG UNIVERSITY STUDENT HAS BEEN KILLED IN THE PAST TWO DAYS AS A RESULT OF THE ACTIONS OF SECURITY TROOPS.)

5. AT THE UNIVERSITY LEVEL, VIRTUALLY ALL NORMAL ACADEMIC ACTIVITY AT MOST OF THE MAJOR COLLEGES IN JAKARTA, BANDUNG, AND BOGOR IS AT A STANDSTILL, LARGELY AS THE RESULT OF EFFECTIVE STUDENT "STRIKES". WHILE SOME OF THE AFFECTED CAMPUSES ARE OFFICIALLY BETWEEN TERMS (FOR EXAMPLE, THE BANDUNG TEACHERS TRAINING INSTITUTE, IKIP, AND THE BANDUNG TECHNICAL INSTITUTE, ITB), IN MOST CASES THE OFFICIAL RE-START OF CLASSES HAS BEEN POSTPONED BY THE GOVERNMENT, BOTH TO MASK THE IMPACT OF THE STRIKES AND TO

SEEK SOME RESOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM. IN BANDUNG, TROOPS ARE IN AROUND-THE-CLOCK PATROL AT ITB AND MAKE PERIODIC FORAYS ONTO THE IKIP AND PADJAJARAN UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES. IN JAKARTA, AS REPORTED IN REFTEL, TROOPS HVE STAGED SEVERAL INCURSIONS ONTO THE CAMPUSES OF THE UNIVERISTY OF INDONESIA (UI) AND IKIP.

6. THE RECTOR OF THE STIKE-BOUND BOGOR AGRICULTURAL INSTITUTE (IPB) HAS ON TWO SEPARATE OCCASIONS IN THE PAST WEEK PUBLICLY (AND BRAVELY) EXPRESSED STRONG SYMPATHY FOR THE GOALS AND AT LEAST SOME OF THE ACTIONS OF STUDENT DISSIDENTS. IN A SPEECH WELCOMING IPB'S INCOMING FRESH-MEN CLASS, RECTOR DR. A.M. SATARI ENCOURAGED THE STUDENTS TO "FACE THE EVENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY WITH A CONFIDENTIAL

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MATURE MIND" AND CAUTIONED THEM NOT TO BE I PATIENT. HE WENT ON, HOWEVER, TO NOTE HIS AGREEMENT WITH THE STUDENTS' ASSESSMENT THAT "WE ARE STILL FAR FROM OUR COMMON IDEALS" AND ADDED THAT TO ACHIEVE THOSE IDEALS WILL REQUIRE "FUNDAMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS ... IN THE ENTIRE APPARATUS." SATARI FURTHER STATED THAT "THERE MUST BE CONSISTENCY BETWEEN THE WORDS AND DEEDS ON THE PART OF THE STATE LEADERS" RATHER THAN THE "DOUBLE STANDARD...

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 JAKARTA 3124

WHICH AT THIS TIME DEFINITELY DOES EXIST, PARTICULARLY IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LAWS." TWO DAYS LATER, THE RECTOR ISSUED A STATEMENT ON THE IPB STUDENTS STRIKE, REGRETTING THE ACTION AND URGING THE STUDENTS TO RETURN TO CLASS, BUT ALSO EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THREE STUDENT DEMANDS: THE CLEANSING OF GOVERNMENT, THE REACTIVATION OF SUSPENDED UNIVERSITY STUDENT COUNCILS AND THE IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF ALL DETAINED IPB STUDENTS. GOING EVEN FURTHER, THE STATEMENT REFUSES TO "PROHIBIT" THE STRIKE AND PROMISES THAT "NO COERCION WHATSOEVER" WILL BE BROUGHT AGAINST ANY STUDENT WHO PARTICIPATES. IN DIRECT CONTRADICTION OF STATEMENTS BY SUDOMO AND MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE THAYEB, THE RECTOR SPECIFICALLY PROMISED THAT NO STUDENT WOULD BE EXPELLED FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE STRIKE.

7. COMMENT: IT NOW APPEARS THAT THE LAST DAYS BEFORE
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THE MPR SESSION WILL BE INCREASINGLY CONTENTIOUS ONES. IPB RECTOR SATARI SEEMS DESTINED TO SUFFER THE FATE OF THE OUSTED RECTOR OF ITB, ISKANDAR ALISYAHBANA. UNLIKE ALISYAHBANA, HOWEVER, SATARI APPEARS TO ENJOY UNEQUIVOCAL SUPPORT FROM HIS STUDENT BODY AND HIS OUSTER COULD SPUR A STRONGER CAMPUS REACTION THAN DID ALISYAGBANA'S. THE SPREAD OF POLITICAL ACTIVITY TO HIGH SCHOOL CAMPUSES AND THE QUICK GOVERNMENT RETALIATION, MOREOVER, INVITES SURFACE COMPARISON TO 1974'S MALARI INCIDENT AND EVEN THE ACTIVIST HEYDAYS OF 1965-66. FINALLY, THERE IS REPORTEDLY INCREASING NERVOUSNESS IN STUDENT CIRCLES (PERHAPS NOT ENTIRELY UNFOUNDED) THAT GOVERNMENT PROVOCATEURS ARE TRYING TO INCITE THEM TO RASH, LOCALIZED ACTION, GIVING THE TROOPS A CHANCE TO CRACK DOWN. THERE IS NO SIGN YET THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS REALLY LOSING CONTROL OR PANICKING, BUT THE MARGIN OF SAFETY IS A BIT SMALLER THAN IT WAS TEN DAYS AGO.
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